

4VAC15-240-32 (NEW). Game: Turkey: Open Season; Certain Counties and Areas; 14 Days Immediately Before the Saturday Prior to the First Monday in November; on Thanksgiving Day and the Day Before; December 2 and for 12 Days Following, Both Dates Inclusive; and on the second Saturday in January and for 14 Days Following.

Summary:

The proposal is to i) create a new six-week fall season in 28 counties, ii) open the fall season one week earlier, and iii) add the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to the fall season.

Proposed language of amendment:

1 **4 VAC 15-240-32(NEW). Open Season; Certain Counties and Areas; 14 Days Immediately Before**
2 **the Saturday Prior to the First Monday in November; Thanksgiving Day and the Day Before; on**
3 **the Monday nearest December 2 and for 12 Days Following, Both Dates Inclusive; and on the**
4 **second Saturday in January and for 14 Days Following.**

5
6 It shall be lawful to hunt turkeys 14 days immediately before the Saturday prior to the first Monday in
7 November; on Thanksgiving Day and the day before; on the Monday nearest December 2 and for 12 days
8 following, both dates inclusive; and on the second Saturday in January and for 14 days following in the
9 counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buchanan, Buckingham, Campbell, Charlotte,
10 Chesterfield, Cumberland, Floyd, Fluvanna, Frederick, Halifax, Hanover, Henry, Henrico, Goochland,
11 Nottoway, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Prince Edward, Shenandoah,
12 Spotsylvania, Tazewell, and Warren.

Rationale:

Turkey populations in 25 of these counties are failing to meet objectives outlined in the Wild Turkey Management Plan. The new proposed season will be six weeks in length, a two-week reduction from the general fall season. Department research has demonstrated that fall hunting mortality can be additive. This reduction is intended to spur turkey population growth in these affected counties.

Turkey populations in Buchanan County are meeting the Turkey Plan objective (stabilize); therefore, staff proposes the fall season be expanded to six weeks. The fall season in Buchanan will be the same as neighboring Tazewell County.

Turkey populations in Warren County have responded positively to the shorter two-week season and have reached moderate levels that exceed the state average. The population is increasing at a significant rate (10% annually). Staff proposes this new six-week turkey season for Warren County.

The turkey population in Cumberland County is meeting its Turkey Plan objective (stable); however, it will be surrounded by four counties in the new six-week season. To simplify regulations, staff proposes that Cumberland County be included in the six-week season.